United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ International control of heavy weapons and deployment of 60,000 to 75,000 peace-keeping troops would be part of wide range of measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina "if and when" all three Bosnian parties sign peace plan, says new report by Secretary-General.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, condems UNITA's shooting down of WFP civilian plane on humanitarian mission in Angola; one Russian crew killed, another seriously injured.

+ Security Council recommends that General Assembly exclude Yugoslav Federal Republic (Serbia and Montenegro) from participating in work of Economic and Social Council; resolution adopted with China and Russian Federation abstaining.

+ Bosnian Serbs deny UNHCR convoys access to besieged town of Gorazde despite assurances of safe passage; 60,000 people face privation; Serbs also confiscate aid bound for Bihac.

+ Lord Owen returns to New York after tour of Balkans and meetings with European officials; looks to Yugoslav Federal Republic to pressure Bosnian Serbs to sign peace plan; talks between Greece and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia begin at Headquarters.

+ Seven-year development programme outlined in Paris Seminar on Assistance to Palestinian People; cost estimated at $11.6 billion annually.

+ Axel Wuestenhagen appointed Director of United Nations Information Service in Vienna.

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Arrangements for the effective international control of heavy weapons and the deployment of 60,000 to 75,000 peace-keeping troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be part of a wide range of measures proposed "if and when"

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all three Bosnian parties sign the Vance/Owen peace plan, according to a new report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He was asked by the Security Council, under resolution 820 (1993), to report on the preparations underway for the implementation of the peace plan once it has been accepted by all the parties.

In his report, dated 26 April, the Secretary-General said additional troops would be deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina to monitor the cessation of hostilities, the restoration of the infrastructure, separation of the forces and the demilitarization of Sarajevo. Other measures under the plan included the monitoring of that country's borders and the return of the forces to designated provinces.

Consultations had already begun, the report said, with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which would contribute troops to the enlarged peace-keeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the plan is signed. NATO had offered to make available a core headquarters in which other potential troop contributors could be incorporated.

The restoration of law, order and civilian authority throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and the preparation of internationally supervised, free and fair elections were among the civilian tasks foreseen under the plan, the Secretary-General wrote. The reversal of "ethnic cleansing" and the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes were also objectives of the plan.

The new operation would be under the overall political and stragetic control of the Security Council and financed collectively by United Nations Member States under the peace-keeping scale of assessments. The Secretary-General also proposed to establish an International Human Rights Monitoring Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to designate members to a Boundary Commission.

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The Security Council last night strongly condemned the shooting down by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of a plane on humanitarian mission to the sity of Luena. According to a report today by the World Food Programme (WFP), one crew member was killed and another seriously injured when they stepped on a mine after the plane crash-landed.

In a statement read out by its President Jamsheed K.A. Marker (Pakistan), the Council said the "outrageous, hostile act" undermined the efforts of the international community to provide humanitarian relief to the suffering population in Angola. It demanded that UNITA take "all necessary measures" to prevent recurrence of such acts of violence against international humanitarian agencies.

The plane had delivered a cargo of 12 tonnes of maize to Luena and was shot at Monday morning after having left the city. The plane landed in a

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minefield about one kilometre out of town. As the seven-member crew got out of the plane, two stepped on a mine and were seriously injured. One Russian crew member later died. The remaining crew members were rescued yesterday by another WFP plane.

Philippe Borel, WFP Director of Operations in Angola, called for immediate implementation of safer and better procedures to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in Angola.

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The General Assembly should exclude the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) from participating in the work of the Economic and Social Council during its summer session, according to resolution 821 (1993) adopted by the Security Council this morning.

By the text, adopted by a vote of 13 in favour with two abstentions (China and the Russian Federation), the Council reaffirmed that the Yugoslav Federal Republic could not continue automatically the membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the United Nations and that the country should therefore apply for membership. The Council decided to consider the matter again before the end of the Assembly's forty-seventh session.

Under resolution 777 (1992), adopted before the beginning of the Assembly's forty-seventh session last September, the Council asked that the Yugoslav Federal Republic be excluded from the Assembly's work and decided that the country should apply for membership in the United Nations. The Assembly subsequently decided to exclude the country from participating in its meetings. In December 1992, the Council decided to keep the matter under continuous review.

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The Bosnian Serb authorities have told the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that aid convoys will not be allowed into the besieged enclave of Gorazde for at least two weeks, according to a UNHCR statement issued today. The authorities, who had given assurances that convoys would be given safe passage, said fighting made movement impossible.

The Bosnian Serb move means new privations for the 60,000 people in Gorazde, the statement said. The authorities have only permitted eight convoys with 641 metric tons of aid to reach the town since December. A further 255 metric tons of aid have been supplied by air.

Meanwhile, Serb forces today confiscated some 20 metric tons of aid bound for the Bihac enclave. Yesterday, two UNHCR workers were injured by shrapnel in central Bosnia and Herzegovina when their convoy was caught in shelling.

The Bosnian Serbs have repeatedly used reports of fighting, or even anticipated hostilities, to hamper UNHCR operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the statement said.

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Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, returned to New York today after a five-day tour of the Balkan region, followed by stops in several European capitals, according to a United Nations spokesman. On his way back, he met respectively with the German Foreign Minister in Bonn; the Danish Foreign Minister, who is currently head of the European Council of Ministers, in Copenhagen; and the French Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and other senior officials in Paris.

The most significant development regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina was the endorsement of the Vance-Owen plan by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the spokesman said. The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference would now look to that Government to pressure the Bosnian Serbs to sign it.

Meanwhile, talks between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia started this afternoon. The Co-Chairmen met first with the representative of Greece and then with the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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A "Programme for the Development of the Palestinian National Economy for the Years 1994-2000" was today outlined in the Paris Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. Yusif A. Sayigh, Coordinator of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Programme, said it would focus on economic rehabilitation initially, followed by construction and economic diversification.

The Programme would require an annual investment of $11.6 billion, Mr. Sayigh said. It was based on the assumption that Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 would revert to Palestinian control, that displaced Palestinians could return home, and that the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority could make decisions on economic and social matters.

The four-day Seminar was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as part of its effort to mobilize support for the development of occupied Palestinian territory.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Axel Wuestenhagen as Director of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna, as of 1 May. A national of Austria, Mr. Wuestenhagen was previously Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Athens. He succeeds Herbert Honsowitz, who has completed his service with the Organization.

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